	Office of Public Instruction Linda McCulloch, Superintendent PO Box 202501 Helena, MT 59620-2501	**HR2 Character Education Project** **Expenditures and Program Guidelines**

Character Education General Information

- The grant runs from 2005-2009
- The annual award is $62,000
- The funding cycle runs from July 1 to June 30
- Year 1 was a planning year for all grantees
- Year 2 is officially the first year of implementation

Allowable/Prohibited Expenses

Spending authority is aligned to the federal OMB Circular A-87 and EDGAR. Districts should reference this guidance in planning activities. Additionally, in evaluating funding priorities, projects are reminded that funds are to be used to **implement** and **test** the HR2 model. All coordinators have participated in professional development on the model and if your proposed expenditure does not assist you in achieving one of these two goals, it is unlikely that the expenditure is appropriate. Or, in evaluating activities, one test of its validity could be its alignment to the character virtue selected for the time period of the activity.

Budget Procedures

- Districts must complete the **Budget** form and the **Cash Advance Request** form annually. It can be sent at any time during the project period, but it must reach the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) no later then the 25th of the month **preceeding** the month a cash advance is needed. Payment of the amount requested for each month will be made on the 10th day of the month.

- Your project's annual report, data requirements, and payment to the evaluator **must** be completed **before** your new budget will be approved each year.

- Grant funds must be spent or obligated by June 30 each year. These obligations must be paid by July 31.

- **Carryover**
    - At the close of the grant period, any unexpended project funds, including funds which are eligible for carryover to the next year's project, must be returned to the OPI.

    - The OPI automatically allows sub-grantees to carryover the funds which are subject to the allowable carryover provisions. To do this, the OPI verifies final carryover amounts for all programs after receiving final fiscal closeout reports and refunds. The OPI determines final carryover amounts and then amends the sub-grantee's appropriate project budget by adding the final carryover amount (up to any percentage limitation) in the Operating Expense category of the budget. If an indirect cost rate was included on the proposed and first-approved budget, the OPI recalculates the approved amount allowable for indirect cost recovery on the amended award.

    - An amended Annual Cash Request form must be submitted to request cash available from carryover.

Spring 2007

- **Record Retention:** Federal regulations require recipients to retain records for a period of three years after the day the fiscal closeout report for a project has been submitted. The recipient's business office must keep a grant file for each project containing the following documents for audit purposes:
    1. Grant application
    2. Approved budgets
    3. Award document
    4. Copies of cash request forms
    5. Copies of cash receipts
    6. Cash disbursement
    7. Important correspondence
    8. Copies of annual reports and closeout documents

More detailed procedures for accounting and tracking grants can be found in the Office of Public Instruction <u>400 Accounting and Reporting Procedures</u> in the State and Federal Grants handbook.

Grant Expenditures and Program Details

- Districts may choose to budget **indirect cost** rates at the level **<u>up to</u>** that approved by the Office of Public Instruction for the grade level in which the project is implemented. Approved indirect cost rates can be found on the OPI Web site at <u>http://www.opi.state.mt.us/SchoolFinance/Acct.html</u>.

- Districts **<u>may choose</u>** to designate **<u>up to</u>** $35,000 toward district **salaries and benefits**. Carryover funds <u>cannot</u> be used to increase the salary limit the next year.

- **Project Evaluator:** $1,500 per year **<u>must</u>** be budgeted for the HR2 evaluator. The Character Education Partnership program at the U.S. Department of Education is part of a research project under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, and our project evaluator must be approved by the Department. The salary was a negotiated condition of the grant. The evaluator will invoice each site for this fee annually. (Sites may choose to also have an internal evaluator, but this will not waive the fee that must be paid to the HR2 project evaluator.) The role of the evaluator will be to document the progress toward **implementing and testing the HR2 model** and submit this documentation to the OPI. The contract will require the evaluator to also provide each site with a brief summary of its annual progress. This summary will accompany the evaluator's invoice.

- **HR2 Annual Report:** The annual report is due to the OPI by September 1. The deadline was changed to accommodate completion of summer activities through June 30 and to also accommodate the fact that individual summer activities include vacation time. This report outlines the activities under each budget category, provides a narrative regarding the implementation activities that took place during the year, and delineates the progress made toward the reform model implementation. Be reminded, however, that the **new annual budget will not be approved and no funds will be sent to the district <u>until</u>** the annual report is submitted and approved, your data is submitted as requested and the project evaluator has been paid.

- The OPI is using a pre-test/posttest method of evaluating this project. All projects should have already submitted Year 1 pre-test data on the following items:
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    - Reading (using Reading First data)
    - Math (using STAR math data. Projects all agreed to use this measure for math assessment)
    - Attendance
    - Tardies

- o Discipline
- o State testing scores
- o The Character Education climate survey
- o Teacher and student turn-over data

- All sites are to establish a local community council to assist with implementation. The group will likely change over time as needs are met and/or newly defined. It will likely also include elders who will greatly facilitate the work in implementing the culture-based curriculum.

- **The Character Education Curriculum** is comprised of two major pieces:
  - o *Part one* is the framework presented by the Helena project. This framework is very flexible in allowing individual schools to tailor it to their tribal needs.
  - o *Part two* is contracted work that is being completed by Helena School District/Wakina Multi-Cultural Educational Center for the project through a native educator who is developing sample lesson plans for each grade level to fit the parts of the matrix. This work will be completed by the time of the October 2007 Character Education Conference, and time will be devoted at the conference to explore it.

- **Professional Development**
  - o Extensive professional development occurred for all sites during year one of the grant. In addition, grant funds can be used to train one of your staff members in Ruby Payne's "Train the Trainer" program on her poverty framework strategies. Sites are asked to select personnel with sound credibility in their district and select someone who will likely remain with the district for some time. The goal obviously is to keep this person on staff for a significant period of time to facilitate infusion of the theories and strategies in spite of staffing turnovers.
  - o Grant funding of this training also comes with the expectation that the District will set aside professional development time for the local trainer to work with school staff throughout each academic year.
  - o The Character Education Conference scheduled for October 2007 represents an important piece of our professional development plan. For this reason, sites are allowed to use grant funds to help implement a plan of action to provide this training to as many local individuals as possible.

- **Local Cultural Learning Trunks**
  Each site can use Character Education grant funds to help prepare their local cultural learning trunk. It is assumed that sites will be working with elders in preparing the trunk. All trunks will be showcased at the conference.

- **Project Meetings**
  The Character Education coordinators (and guests you may choose to bring) are expected to attend scheduled meetings. Besides the professional development, many important decisions are made at these meetings and it is important that each District be represented. Minimally, meetings are scheduled on a quarterly basis. As special projects arise, meeting frequency could increase. Districts agreed to send the coordinator and/or other appropriate staff to all scheduled meetings and activities by signing the grantee assurances. Grant funds can be used to facilitate attendance.

- **Character Education Room and Parents' Center**
  Districts can use grant funds to establish a Character Education Room and the Parents' Center.

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